

## A LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER

## Dear Time-Reader

Reporters who cover international conferences are somewhat like golfers or tennis players who follow the tournament circuit. They are constantly running into familiar faces, former opponents and old friends under new circumstances. They also find some of the same frustrations.

TIME Correspondent John Beal, a veteran of international conferences, is a case in point. At Geneva, Beal found some familiar faces in the Chinese delegation. The first was Chou En-lai, Red China's Premier, Foreign Minister and head of the Geneva delegation. Beal had last dealt with Chou in Nanking in 1946. At the time, Beal was on a leave of absence from TIME to serve as an adviser to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek during the period of the Marshall mission. Beal got to know Chou well during his China stint. "It was there," says he, "that I learned what the Chinese Communists were like. Chou was my teacher. He was in Nanking heading the delegation negotiating with the Nationalist government, and his teaching was so thorough that later I was surprised by nothing that happened in Korea."

Another Geneva figure Beal recognized was the delegation's secretary, Wan Ping-nan, "a heavy, sinister-looking, German-educated Chinese whom I had known in Nanking." One member of the delegation was unidentified by the West for the first three days. On the fourth day of the conference, Beal cabled: "I was able to identify this man for the American delegation as Chang Wen-chin, who served Chou as secretary and English interpreter during the Marshall mission and is in the same capacity here."

Beal also cited an example of the frustrations of any reporter, old acquaintance or not, in dealing with the men from behind the Bamboo Curtain. Said Beal:

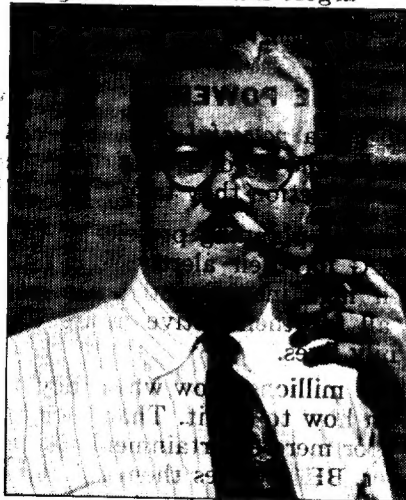
TO observe the home life of the Chinese delegation I went to dinner at one of their hotels. As they came into the dining room, three men and a woman sat at one table; another group of three men sat next to them. One of these, I felt certain, was the Chang Wen-chin I had known in Nanking. I had seen him get out of the car with Chou, and his picture was in the Paris *Herald Tribune* with Chou.

As they ate, Chang passed to the next table a copy of the *Tribune* that he had brought with him, apparently indulging in the bourgeois pleasure of

getting his picture in the paper. There was laughter about it at both tables.

I waited in the lobby until they had finished and accosted Chang. He answered to his name. When I introduced myself, he remembered me from Nanking with what I thought was a friendly but guarded air. Our conversation went like this:

"Well, how is the conference going?"  
"I am attending the conference."



JOHN BEAL

Walter Bennett

Chang said, "I have no comment on that."

"Do you still interpret for General Chou, and sit on the floor with him?"

There seemed to be some pride in his affirmative answer to this and I asked, "Does General Chou stay at the villa all the time, and come in only to the sessions?"

"He stays at the villa most of the time," said Chang, but he seemed to be a little uncertain of his answer.

I then asked how I could get in touch with my old acquaintance Wan Ping-nan, the secretary of the Chinese delegation. Said Chang, "We have a liaison office at the Beau Rivage. A certain Mr. Kuo is in charge of it."

"Will you tell me a little about your delegation?" I asked.

Chang looked at his watch, said: "I am busy. I must go to my office. I will see you next time."

Says Beal: "I made a point to visit the Beau Rivage as soon as possible. But there how certain Mr. Kuo said, 'I don't think I can find Wan Ping-nan.'"

"I thanked him and left."

Cordially yours,

James A. Linen

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